

CODE

COUNCIL OF ONTARIO DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION
CONSEIL ONTARIEN DES DIRECTIONS DE L'ÉDUCATION

AI in Education



LEADERSHIP CONVERSATION

Executive Summary

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping education globally. For Ontario's 73 school boards, AI has moved from novelty to strategic priority.

AI's rapid growth has resulted in billions of dollars of investment worldwide since the release of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT in November 2022.

In education, the potential for AI to support personalized learning, provide language translation, streamline administrative tasks, and strengthen accessibility has become evident. At the same time, questions about privacy, academic integrity, and bias and reliability of results must be considered.

This brief helps Directors of Education:

- Understand AI's opportunities and risks.
- Situate Ontario's approach within national contexts.
- Identify leadership roles and immediate actions.

Key Takeaways

- **AI is here now:** Already widely used by students, staff, and parents/guardians.
- **Ontario lags in practice:** Curriculum mentions AI, but practical guidance is minimal.
- **Educators want support:** Professional learning and resources are needed.
- **Equity priority:** Without planning, access and protections will vary by district.
- **Data protection** and the responsible use of AI across all job functions are needed.
- **Directors set the tone:** Leadership, policy/guidance, and communication determine success.

Key Concepts and Terminology

Term	Definition	Example
AI	Artificial Intelligence includes devices performing tasks that would normally require human intelligence.	Translation, adaptive software, apps like Siri, Alexa, and Google Assistant use AI to understand voice input; Google Maps/Waze are also examples of AI use.
Generative AI	A type of AI that creates new original content (text, image, video, code).	ChatGPT, Gemini, CoPilot, Adobe Firefly, DALL-E; Midjourney, Sora, Suno AI
LLM	Large Language Model – powerful generative AI that has been trained on massive data that allow it to generate human-like output.	Claude by Anthropic, Gemini by Google, Llama by Meta. Grok by xAI
Key Players	Major Tech companies are driving AI innovation.	OpenAI, Google, Microsoft, Meta, Anthropic, xAI

Canadian Perspectives

AI Literacy

Students and educators need foundational AI understanding.

Ethical Integration

Must prioritize transparency, privacy, fairness.

Policy-to-Practice Gap

Educators lack classroom-ready guidance.

Global Lessons

UNESCO/OECD emphasize human-centred, equity-focused AI. PISA will start testing for AI Literacy in the 2029 assessment cycle.

Policy Context

Ontario Principles for Responsible AI

AI guidance in Ontario sits within a wider provincial framework for all Ministries. The Ontario government issued a [Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Directive](#). This includes the following 6 Principles:

1. AI is used to benefit the people of Ontario
2. AI use is justified and proportionate, and AI systems used are reliable and valid
3. AI is used in a safe, secure and privacy protective way
4. AI use is human rights affirming and non-discriminator
5. AI use is transparent and meaningful explanations of decisions are made available
6. AI use is accountable and responsible

[Ontario Bill 194 \(2024\)](#)

Strengthening Cyber Security and Building Trust in the Public Sector Act. This Bill includes Ontario School Boards and addresses cyber security and artificial intelligence systems at public sector entities.

[Conseil des ministres de l' éducation \(Canada\)](#)

June 2025 discussions included the need for ethical and inclusive policies and the potential of digital innovation to enhance teaching and learning.

[Canadian Teachers' Federation](#)

Calling on all levels of government to regulate the use of AI in Canadian K-12 public education. At the School Board level, they recommend that procurement of AI aligns with ethical and pedagogical standards; privacy protection that safeguards student and staff data; and equitable access to AI technologies.

Ontario Curriculum Snapshot

The Ontario Ministry of Education has not yet issued AI guidance to school boards, other than directing that the content of one Ministry PD day in 2025-2026 address AI. The Ministry of Education has included reference to AI in several updated policy documents in recent years.

Elementary

Emerging technologies (Science/Tech), digital literacy (Language), contextual math curriculum mentions.

Secondary

AI impacts (Gr.9 Science), project-based work (Computer Studies), future of work (Careers), cross-curricular in English, Tech Ed, Geography, Philosophy.

2025-2026 Mandatory PD Day - AI

- Discussing AI's potential as a teaching and learning tool
- Learning activities to become familiar with the board's approved AI tools
- Exploring mandatory learning in the Ontario curriculum on AI and digital literacy, including learning on cyber security
- Providing educators with targeted training on cyber safety, cyber security, and online privacy to address technology-related risks and ensure student safety

Comparative Provincial Guidance

Province/Territory	Resource
Alberta	Artificial Intelligence Policy Guidance Source: Alberta School Boards Association
British Columbia	Considerations for Using AI Tools in K-12 Schools Digital Literacy and the use of AI in education: supports for British Columbia Schools Source: Ministry of Education and Child Care
Quebec	L'utilisation pédagogique, éthique et légale de l'intelligence artificielle générative (French only) Source: Gouvernement du Québec Ministère de l'Éducation
New Brunswick	Recommended Approaches to Generative Artificial Intelligence Source: New Brunswick Ministry of Education
United States Guidance	A summary of States that provide AI guidance to K-12 has been compiled by AI for Education

As of August 2025, only a handful of provinces have released AI guidance to the education sector.

To date, most districts have opted for AI guidance or guidelines as opposed to a standalone policy.

One policy to review is the district “Safe, Inclusive, and Accepting Schools Policy (Code of Conduct).” Consider adding a section that indicates that discipline may be assigned up to and including suspension for the posting of deepfake images/audios/videos. Consider prohibiting the use of AI to maliciously spread false information.

Directors or their designate should update Responsible Use of Technology student and/or staff agreements, to include reference to the appropriate use of AI.

Review existing policies that can be updated to include reference to the appropriate use of AI.

The Role of the Director

Directors of Education serve an important role in AI implementation including:

Set Vision

Align AI with strategic plan (Board Student Achievement Plan) and Board priorities. Ensure staff understand how AI supports existing priorities.

Manage Risk

Data, privacy, cybersecurity safeguards.

Lead Learning

Invest in Student/staff AI literacy.

Model Use

Demonstrate ethical, practical applications.

Engage Trustees

Provide governance PD on AI.

Equity Lens

An equity-focused approach that considers AI will:

- Address digital divides to ensure that all students have access to quality AI resources.
- Ensure tools reflect diverse voices by reviewing AI tools for bias.
- Ensure rights for Catholic & French-language boards to select approaches based on language and/or denominational rights.
- Respect Indigenous perspectives.
- Include parent/guardian & student input into AI integration and AI plans.



Challenges and Implications

- Policy Lag** Students, staff, and parents/guardians are already using AI in the absence of guidance from Districts/Province.
- Capacity Gaps** Educators lack training & confidence to use of AI tools, and are seeking guidance on which tools they can use.
- Equity Concerns** Widening digital divide, with some parents/guardians providing paid AI apps for their children while others do not have access.
- Data Privacy** Increased cyber risks through the use of AI requires AI counter methods; staff need to understand what steps they need to take to protect student data.
- Academic Integrity** Plagiarism & deepfake concerns. Assessment and Evaluation practices need to be updated and reviewed.
- Financial Costs** No dedicated ministry funding.



Strategies for Directors and Senior Teams

Create a Board AI Framework/Plan

Align with Ontario's AI principles.

Engage Partners

Trustees, unions, students, families, staff, community

Pilot AI Projects

Include admin, literacy/numeracy, accessibility, language tools.

Evaluate and Adjust

Monitor outcomes, share across boards.

Invest in Professional Learning

Partner with higher ed, community partners, business partners to build capacity across the district.

For Further Reflection

1. What is our “why” for using AI?

2. How do we align AI with current priorities?

3. What lessons from social media apply here?

4. How do we address plagiarism and develop academic honesty?

5. What resources and budgets will support implementation?

6. Who should sit on our AI steering committee?

7. How do we protect students already using chatbots as “therapists?”

8. How will senior staff model responsible AI use?

Conclusion

AI is no longer optional—it is reshaping education now. AI represents both a significant opportunity and a complex challenge for Ontario's education system.

Directors of Education are uniquely positioned to ensure that AI is implemented in ways that strengthen public education: to foster safe, inclusive, and high-quality learning and teaching environments for all students and staff.

With strong leadership, an equity lens, and a commitment to professional learning, Districts can move beyond fear and uncertainty toward innovative, responsible, and human-centred use of AI in schools.



Additional Resources

- [Advanced Learning Partnerships \(ALP\)](#) – Gen AI resources for K-12 District Leaders and Boards of Education
- [AI 101 for Teachers](#) – free foundational online learning series on AI for educators
- [AI4K12](#) – Comprehensive list of AI resources
- [AI for Education](#) – Free resources for schools or classrooms
- [AI for Equity](#) – AI Playbook for School Network Leaders
- [AI Guidance for Schools Toolkit](#) – A free toolkit to assist districts and school leaders with AI implementation while understanding and mitigating the potential risks. This resource is from TeachAI
- [AI Literacy Curriculum Hub](#) – List of free AI literacy lessons
- [AI Toolkit for School Districts](#) – A district focused roadmap for thoughtful AI planning – Free from Common Sense Education
- [C21 – Dell](#) – Cross Canada Use Cases of AI in Education
- [ChatGPT foundations for K-12 Educators](#) – Free course from Common Sense Education
- [CNET](#) – Glossary of AI Terms
- [CoSN](#) – Leading Education Innovation – AI Resource Library
- [CRAFT](#) – AI Literacy resources – free from Stanford University
- [Day of AI](#) – free course curriculum and PD videos
- [Digital Promise](#) – Artificial Intelligence in Education – resources and AI Literacy framework
- [Get Started with Google AI in K12](#)
- [ISTE](#) – AI resources, note that not all of their resources are free
- [Microsoft Learn Education Center](#) – AI for education: Resources and Learning
- [MIT RAISE](#) – Responsible AI for Social Empowerment and Education
- [OASBO – ECNO](#) – Resources: Generative AI in Education
- [OECD](#) – Artificial Intelligence and Education and Skills webinars and publications
- [UNESCO](#) – Artificial Intelligence in Education resources and publications



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